

**ABSTRACT**

A method of assembling a drive axle assembly of a tandem axle assembly is provided. The method includes the step of providing a differential carrier housing having a forward opening and a rear opening. The method further includes inserting several internal  
5 components of the drive axle assembly through the rear opening of the carrier housing including input and output gears, a driven gear, a pinion shaft which is rotatably coupled to the driven gear, and a power divider subassembly having a plurality of differential gears. Insertion of these components through the rear opening facilitates the use of a one-piece differential carrier housing with small front openings and maximum structural integrity.

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